

Message Text

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44

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00

INRE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 SAB-01 OC-05 CCO-00 OPR-02 A-01

SY-05 IO-10 TRSE-00 AID-05 SCS-03 SCA-01 SCCT-01

(ISO)W

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O R 011336Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5054

DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

CIA WASHDC

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

USINT BAGHDAD UNN

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USCINCEUR

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 8317

STUTTGART FOR ELG

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PGOV, LE, PLO

SUBJECT: ANNOUNCEMENT OF SIX-MAN CABINET ENDS POLITICAL ASPECT
OF LEBANON CRISIS

REF: BEIRUT 8274

1. LEBANESE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION ANNOUNCED AT 1300 HOURS
LOCAL ON JULY 1 COMPOSITION OF NEW SIX-MAN CABINET AS FOLLOWS:

RASHID KARAME (SUNNI) PRIME MINISTER, MINISTRIES OF
DEFENSE, FINANCE & INFORMATION

CAMILLE CHAMOUN MINISTRIES OF INTERIOR, PTT AND
(MARONITE) HYDRO-ELECTRIC RESOURCES

AMIR MAJID ARSLAN MINISTRIES OF HEALTH, HOUSING
(DRUZE) AND COOPERATIVES AND AGRICULTURE

ADEL OSSEIRAN MINISTRIES OF JUSTICE, PUBLIC
(SHIITE) WORKS, TRANSPORTATION, ECO-
NOMY AND COMMERCE

PHILIPPE TAQLA (GREEK MINISTRIES OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
(CATHOLIC) NATIONAL EDUCATION, AND PLANNING

GHASSAN TUEINI (GREEK MINISTRIES OF LABOR AND SOCIAL
ORTHODOX AFFAIRS, TOURISM AND PETROLEUM
AND INDUSTRY.

2. ALTHOUGH THE NAMES OF CABINET MEMBERS WERE ANNOUNCED
EVENING JUNE 30 (FBIS JN301720Y), FACT THAT PORTFOLIOS WERE
NOT RPT NOT ASSIGNED AT SAME TIME GAVE RISE TO SOME APPRE-
HENSION AMONG PUBLIC THAT SIGNIFICANT OBSTACLES STILL IMPEDING
POLITICAL PROCESS. DIFFICULTIES, WHICH WERE NOT FINALLY IRONED
OUT UNTIL MORNING JULY 1, DID IN FACT REMAIN AND WE UNDERSTAND
THAT HAZARDOUS INTERNAL SECURITY SITUATION LAST NIGHT PRE-
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VENTED SEVERAL CABINET MEMBERS FROM HONORING SUMMONS
TO PRESIDENTIAL PALACE UNTIL THIS MORNING.

3. PRIMARY PROBLEM IN INTERNAL ORGANIZATION OF CABINET (ONCE
KARAME-CHAMOUN RECONCILIATION ON JUNE 30 PUT AN END TO FUED
LASTING SINCE 1958 CIVIL WAR) REVOLVED AROUND ASSIGNMENT
OF DEFENSE AND INTERIOR PORTFOLIOS. CHAMOUN REPORTEDLY INSIS-
TED ON INTERIOR AND WE ALMOST CERTAIN THIS WAS CONDITION LAID

DOWN BY PHALANGIST LEADER PIERRE GEMAYEL FOR DROPPING HIS INSISTENCE UPON PHALANGE REPRESENTATION IN NEW GOVT. TO OFF-SET CHRISTIAN HOLD ON INTERIOR, KARAME INSISTED ON HOLDING POST OF DEFENSE MINISTER--CLAIM THAT WAS CONTESTED BY AGED AND AILING DRUZE POLITICO ARSLAN, WHO HAS PREVIOUSLY HELD DEFENSE SEAT MOST RECENTLY IN 1972. GIVEN FACT THAT SOCIAL-IST LEADER KAMAL JUMBLATT (HIMSELF A DRUZE) HAD OPPOSED ARSLAN'S PRESENCE IN CABINET AND PUSHED FOR SUBSTITUTION OF NAJIB ALAMUDDINE, SEEMS PROBABLE THAT KARAME, WITH ASSIST OF CHAMOUN (ALLY OF ARSLAN) AND OTHERS, WAS ABLE TO CONVINCE ARSLAN TO SETTLE FOR LESSER PORTFOLIOS AND THUS REMOVE LAST HURDLE ON POLITICAL FRONT.

4. CHARACTER OF NEW CABINET IS DISTINCTLY CONSERVATIVE, PROBABLY REFLECTING HARD BARGAIN DRIVEN BY PHALANGE IN RELINQUISHING THEIR CLAIM TO A PORTFOLIO AT THIS TIME. WE WOULD IMAGINE THAT KAMAL JUMBLATT, WHO LEFT BEIRUT FOR CAIRO LAST EVENING (JUNE 30) IS NOT RPT NOT AT ALL PLEASED WITH COMPOSITION. HOWEVER, JUMBLATT PLAYED HIS RIGHT CARD IN KEEPING PHALANGE ON SIDELINES FOR THE MOMENT AND APPARENTLY DID NOT HAVE SUFFICIENT TRUMP CARDS LEFT TO TAKE FURTHER TRICKS IN BARGAINING ON DETAILS. WHILE HE MAY BE PREPARED TO LIVE WITH NEW GOVT.,--AT LEAST FOR THE PROJECTED TWO TO THREE MONTHS OF ITS LIFE AT WHICH TIME PRESUMABLY A NEW CABINET INCORPORATING BOTH THE PHALANGE AND JUMBLATTISTS WILL BE FORMED--IT IS FAR FROM CERTAIN, HOWEVER, THAT MANY OF JUMBLATT'S "PROGRESSIVE" SUPPORTERS, AS WELL AS UNRECONSTRUCTED PHALANGIST HARDLINERS, WILL BE SATISFIED WITH POLITICAL COMPROMISE.

5. ON FIRST REFLECTION, WE BELIEVE CABINET REPRESENTS MUCH BETTER SOLUTION TO POLITICAL ASPECT OF CRISIS THAN OTHER CONCEIVABLE COMBINATIONS AND INCLUDES SEVERAL CAPABLE AND INFLUENTIAL PERSONALITIES. IF IT TAKES HOLD RAPIDLY AND DECISIVELY, CONFIDENTIAL

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IT STANDS REASONABLE CHANCE OF ARRESTING DETERIORATING SITUATION ON GROUND AND EVENTUALLY BUYING TIME TO TACKLE BASIC PROBLEMS UNDERLYING CLASHES. NEVERTHELESS, LAST NIGHT'S ANNOUNCEMENT DID NOT RPT NOT HAVE DESIRED EFFECT OF CALMING LOCAL SITUATION AND BEIRUT AND OTHER PARTS OF COUNTRY EXPERIENCED WHAT WAS PROBABLY WORST NIGHT OF TERROR AND DESTRUCTION TO DATE. SECURITY SITUATION REMAINS CRITICAL (SEPTTEL) AND, AS REPORTED PREVIOUSLY, CLASHES HAVE ASSUMED MOMENTUM NOT RPT NOT DETERMINED BY POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS. THERE REMAIN MANY ARMED ELEMENTS WHO DO NOT RPT NOT REGARD THIS CABINET AS ADEQUATE SOLUTION AND NEW GOVT WILL HAVE ITS PLATE FULL BRINGING THEM TO HEEL.
GODLEY

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